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REMARKS

Following entry of the above amendment, claims 2-5, 7, 8, 26-30, 36-39, and 56-68 will be pending. Claims 32-35 have been canceled. Claim 36 has been re-written in independent form without change in scope.

Allowed Claims

The indicated allowance of claims 2-5, 7, 8, 26-30, 37-39, and 56-68 (all of the pending claims except claim 36) is noted with appreciation.

Interview Summary

The undersigned thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended in the telephone interview of July 31, 2006. Agreement was reached that rejected claims 32-35 would be canceled, that claim 36 would be written in independent form, and that claim 36 would be allowed once written arguments were filed providing the reasons that were offered in the interview for patentability of claim 36.

Prior Art Rejection

Claim 36 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Cherry et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,508,409 ("Cherry"), in view of Werner, U.S. Patent No. 4,408,926 ("Werner").

Cherry discloses a wire splicing device that includes tapered collars 18 that are pressed onto the tapered shells 14, to drive the shells inward. Cherry discloses that the tapered collars 18 may have a two-piece construction, with an outer insulating cover 40 and an inner member 42 of relatively rigid material, such as aluminum. Col. 2, lines 42-44. An inner surface 48 of the collars 18 is left free of insulation, to provide metal-to-metal contact with the shells 14. Col. 2, lines 49-53. Cherry discloses that the insulating cover 40 is arrayed so that the free ends 44b of the insulating cover 40 catch on ends 32 of the

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tapered shells 14, deforming the free ends 44b to form a seal around the cable 20. Col. 3, lines 31-38; Fig. 4.

Werner is relied upon for its disclosure of that a cable connector with tapered jaws and tapered collars may also be employed to couple together reinforcing rods.

Claim 36 recites a reinforcing bar splice that includes tapered collars with a steel inner sleeve inner portion and wound carbon thread. Figs. 27 and 28 of the present application show an embodiment of such a tapered collar. As described in the specification, the inner steel portion protects the carbon fiber outer portion from cutting by sharp edges, and the wound carbon thread advantageously provides greater tensile strength than steel, with less weight and bulk. Page 15, lines 8-14. While the claimed tapered collars have the material with the greater tensile strength as the outer layer of the collars, Cherry's collars 40 have the "relatively rigid material" as their inner layer (the inner member 42). The insulating cover 40 of Cherry's tapered collars 18 provides electrical insulation, which is useful for an electrical cable connector, but not for the claimed reinforcing bar splice, since reinforcing bars do not generally have electric currents running through them. In addition, the recited wound carbon thread is a rigid material, and would be incapable of performing the other function of Cherry's insulating cover 40, that of sealing the opening in which the cable ends 20 are inserted. The free ends 44b of Cherry's insulating covers 40 deform ("mushroom") to provide a seal around the cable ends, col. 3, lines 31-38. Rigid wound carbon thread is incapable of performing this function, and in any event there would be no reason in general to provide sealing for a reinforcing bar splice, since the splice will likely end up encased in concrete. Since neither Cherry nor Werner teach or suggest the features of claim 36, claim 36 is patentable over Cherry and Werner, either alone or in combination.

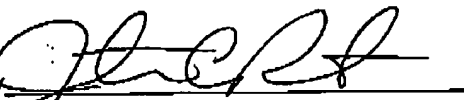
10/697,509ERICP0326USBConclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons withdrawal of the remaining rejection is requested, in which case the application would be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

No fee is believed due with the filing of this paper. In the event any fees are due in connection with the filing of this paper, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to our Deposit Account No. 18-0988 (Charge No. ERICP326USB).

Respectfully submitted,

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